

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

In the specification, the second and third full paragraphs on page 5 have been amended to correct minor editorial problems. Both of these amendments are language insertions where obvious deletions of a word or phrase had been inadvertently omitted and are obvious typographical errors. No new matter is represented by the amendments.

Originally presented claim 3 stands rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as indefinite for reciting “fiber component” for lack of antecedent basis. Claim 3 is dependent on claim 2 which includes “fiber” as a designated type of support component in a Markush group. It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is overcome by the amendment of claim 2 to specify the selection is made from a group of “components” and by the amendment of claim 3 to indicate the plural, “fibers”, to mirror the plural form of “fiber” to mirror “fibers” in claim 2.

Original claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) over EP 1 191 217 A2 for lack of novelty.

Original claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(e) separately and independently over U.S. Patent No. 6,440,200 to Sakaibara et al. and U.S. Patent No. 6,752,859 to LaBarge et al. for lack of novelty.

Upon review of the claims in light of the Examiner’s application of the above listed prior art patent references, the applicant recognizes the original claims may have fallen short of accurately describing the patentable subject matter of the invention disclosed by the specification as originally filed. Disclosed detail that distinguishes the applicant’s invention over the prior art may have gone unclaimed. In particular, it is considered that the embodiment of the invention disclosed in Figure 4b and in the third full paragraph on page 5 of the specification was not specifically claimed. Therefore, independent claim 1 and 6 have been amended as noted and new dependent claims 7-9 have been added to specifically claim such patentable embodiment. It is respectfully submitted that the claims as amended hereby are novel and unobvious over the relied-on cited prior art references, and the applicants respectfully request reconsideration thereof.

Appl. No. 10/621,946  
Amdt. Dated December 22, 2004  
Reply to Office action of July 1, 2004

Case Docket No. CHR 02-38

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

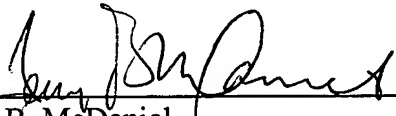
No additional fees, other than for extension of time, are believed to be due in connection with the filing of this amendment and response. Should it be determined that additional fees are due and payable, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any required fees or credit any overpayment to the assignee's Deposit Account No. 23-1160.

Respectfully submitted,

Attachment

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